The Humanistic Values in Ernest Hemingway's 'The Old Man and the Sea' and' A Farewell to Arms '.

Written by:

Muhammad Dera' Farhan

College of Education for Humanities

Department of English

Abstract

This paper explores the humanistic values that are embodied in Ernest Hemingway's writings particularly, The Old Man and the Sea and A Farewell to Arms. The most common values are patience, fortitude, dignity, humanity, honour, pride, and friendship. The Old Man and the Sea is full of such these values throughout the events of the novella especially in the three-day struggle between Santiago and the marlin. In A Farewell to Arms, the gloomy suffering and the devastation of the war are compensated by the hope of Frederick and Catherine and their true love in the midst of the war and its tragedies. It also shows humanity and the true friendship between Henry Frederick and Rinaldi.

الخلاصة

يستكشف هذا البحث القيم الإنسانية التي تجسدت في الأعمال الروائية للكاتب (ارنست هيمينغواي) وبالأخص الشيخ والبحر ووداعا للسلاح.إن من أكثر القيم الإنسانية شيوعا هي الصبر والشرف والكرامة والإنسانية والصداقة والكبرياء.في رواية الشيخ والبحر تتمثل هذه القيم وعلى مدار أحداث القصة خصوصا في صراع الشيخ والسمكة الذي استمر لثلاثة أيام متواصلة أما في رواية وداعا للسلاح فقد أوضحت المعاناة والدمار في الحرب الحالة التي انتهت بعد الأمل والحب الحقيقي بين هنري فريدريك وكاثرين وكذلك قيمة الصداقة الحقيقية والإنسانية التي لا تختفي بالرغم من ماسي الحرب.

In 1945 Hemingway was awarded the Nobel prize for his novella The Old Man and the Sea . The committee acknowledged the " heroic pathos"[1] in the" powerful style making mystery of the art of modern narration"[2] displayed in this novella, and Hemingway's influence on contemporary style .

One of the significant aspects of Hemingway's humanistic values is what he shows that good morality is not a necessary concomitant of a religion or the religious mind. He did not believe in the ritual aspect of religion but he believed in the values advocated by religion. His characters are seldom or rather never religious ; they are involved in the everyday of their daily life rather than striving to attain a place in Heaven After death.

Hemingway's humanistic values can also be seen in his concept of Man vis –a –vis nature. Unlike the environmentalist, Hemingway does not advocate ideas of not using or violating nature. In the scheme of a universe Man has the ultimate importance and for his benefit that nature has to be used .We see this theme very much clear in the harmony of the old man, Santiago, and the nature surrounding him .

Hemingway's short stories have a great importance as they reflect his basic themes and values . He starts his career as a short story writer and from these stories emerged his major themes of

alienation, war, and most significantly his basic theme of humanity and humanistic values that this paper will deal with .

What is commonly referred to as " Hemingway's code " can be said to constitute Hemingway' humanism with its emphasis on honour, valour , dignity, and grace under pressure. It can be seen in the way that the characters in his works evolve their own values system in the otherwise corrupted world. Hemingway believes that writing at its best is a lonely life for he does his work alone and if he is a good enough writer he must face the eternity or the lack of it every day. This underlines the need for truthfulness. Once he sheds his aesthetic loneliness and becomes part of the crowd, he feels and writes what he is supposed to feel and write. The result will be insincere writing, and his work deteriorates. Since the writer is concerned with rendition of experience and emotion, he must take care to kindle the intended emotion in the reader. This requires the writer to pinpoint the actual things which produce the emotion. Hemingway's writing has many classical virtues. His clear, objective observation of what really happens in action, stripping away what is not absolutely necessary, and his concentration on the significant emotive details. His belief, that a new book should try for something beyond attainment, makes him a romantic writer.

Hemingway's humanism can be seen in his concept of brotherhood, compassion and pity which a reader finds, for instance, in works like The Old Man and the Sea and A Farewell to Arms. Hemingway is not as direct in his approach as other novelists such

as E. M. Forster, but these values form a very important content in his works. Stylistically, Hemingway is a humanist writer for he writes realistic prose .He gives us a 'slice of life '. His characters are portrayed not as masters of their own fate but as individuals without control over their destiny. In this sense Hemingway is a humanist for a realist is an offshoot of humanism. Besides, Hemingway depicts his characters as rational human being. In this sense Hemingway is a humanist writer for one of the basic aims of humanism is the evolution of human being .According to Hemingway the true worthy value lies not necessarily in victory but in the struggle ;in the way we live and in the kind of choices we make. In this sense Hemingway is somewhat of an existentialist, he, however, does not have the nihilism or soul-weariness of an existentialist. An optimism is always there in his works. Hemingway's portrayal of Man's attempt to live life by a certain value system constitutes his morality and humanism. The present paper deals with two works written by Hemingway that embody his humanistic values. The first story is The Old Man and The Sea and the second one is A Farewell to Arms.

Humanism is very much exemplified by The Old Man and the Sea. It is a story of an old man, Santiago , who had been on the sea for eighty four days without catching a fish .He then ventures far out to the sea alone in his boat ;whose flag is described as the" flag of permanent defeat "[3] and the old man is called salao which is unlucky. Thus Hemingway from the very beginning of the story established a fatalistic tone.

Having ventured out on the sea alone, Santiago hooks a giant fish marlin in the gulf stream. For two days and two nights, he holds on while he is towed further out to the sea. Finally he brings the fish alongside, harpoons it and lashes it to the skiff. The old man's happiness knows no bounds but it is too good to last. A shark strikes it, the old man kills the shark but he realizes that the smell of blood will attract other sharks. It must be noted that there are brilliant flashes of Hemingway's realism in The Old Man and the Sea. The sharks, for example, are depicted with remarkable vividness as they rush the dead marlin and savagely tear it apart. The shovel-nosed sharks are made good and true enough so that they are convincing as sharks and as embodiments of pure evil. Yet, in the face of adversity, the old man does not lose hope and in fact considers it a sin to lose hope.

Throughout the episode of catching the fish and holding on to it, we have a superb example of the old Man's endurance and perseverance, as he says himself " I may not be as strong as I think but I know many tricks and I have resolution."[4] While holding on to it, the old man constantly displays his self-esteem. "But I will show him what a man can do and what a man endures."[5]

Santiago is a code hero and he observes the code of fishing. He treats the fish with great dignity, "fish" he said, "I love you and respect you very much. But I will kill you dead before this day ends."[6] Then again a little later, "I will kill him though he said "in all his greatness and his glory, although it is unjust he thought, "but I will show him

what a man endures ."[7] The old man is aware of the greatness and glory of the fish and even respects him. At the same time, he is aware and proud of his own endurance too.

Towards the end the old man contemplates over his apparent defeat, perhaps it was because he tried to over-reach himself by going too far on the sea. He thinks that may be it was a sin for him to have killed the fish, but he soon rejects this idea because he killed this fish for his survival ;he is a fisherman ; that is his profession ; the profession that he was born for. The cautionary voice, however, reminds him that he did not kill just to keep alive, he kills the fish for his pride. Then he rationalizes that every thing kills something or the other in some way. What is more he killed the fish well, without causing unnecessary pain and by treating it with dignity. Having acknowledged his pride, the Old Man achieves humility and thus comes to have a deeper understanding of what life is about. Hemingway's humanism lies in insisting on dignity and pride. Santiago is a performer of 'Hemingway code ' . He is a man of dignity, honour, courage, and fortitude; he shows grace under pressure. He gives expression to Hemingway's view that "man can be destroyed but not defeated."[8]

The Old Man and the Sea has been compared with many established literary classics-from The Odyssey and Job to Lord Jim. Santiago tests his championship and experiences his spiritual renewal away from the village in unspoiled nature again links The

Old Man and the Sea to familiar tradition. Numerous American heroes escape to nature to preserve their sense of selfhood, their vital freedom. Santiago, whom Hemingway associates with the enduring vitality of the sea in the title and by the color of his cheerful and undefeated eyes, clearly derives strength of body and character from his intimate relationship with the sea, and in so doing he stands, not alienated, but as a symbolic ideal for his community. Hemingway, in The Old Man and the Sea, comes close to unqualified celebration of primitive or childlike intimacy with nature as the means to spiritual transcendence. Even the beasts and adversary in The Old Man and the Sea are not fearsome, directly or symbolically. The physical punishment Santiago undergoes during his three days at sea results directly from his resolution to hang on to the marlin rather than cut loose. He is never represented as physically threatened by the strength or malice of either marlin or the sharks. The first beast opponent, the marlin, is himself a noble with a sword, brother to; the second, the shark, is kindred to the hero's not very sinister left hand. The Old Man and the Sea is, from one angle, an account of Hemingway's personal struggle, grim, resolute and eternal, to write his best. With his seriousness, his precision and his perfectionism, Hemingway saw his craft exactly as Santiago sees it. The old man and the Sea is a powerful piece of literary work, and a large part of it's power is the power of love.

Still we should consider that what has been widely praised as a "classic" and "masterpiece" and which continues to enjoy wide popularity, according to the evidence of it's sales, can also be

attacked as 'fakery' and "fraud" as "imitation Hemingway."[9] The reader should judge both attitudes in the light of his own reading of The Old Man and the Sea. Most explicators agree that Hemingway's theme, expressed in the apparently simple, yet actually intricated design plot of Santiago's adventure with the marlin and sharks, is man's capacity to withstand and transcend hardships of time and circumstances. Hemingway depicts in circumstantial detail elemental tests of endurance, physical struggle, fatigue, solitude, old age, impending death to which Santiago is subjected and also his courageous response, summoning both physical energy and imaginative vision to counter the forces testing him. Hemingway presents the action not in abstract terms-gain and loss, strength and weakness, youth and age –but in vivid images –marlin and sharks, right hand and left, Monolin and Santiago.

The old Man and the Sea is a novella that is perhaps the most humanistic of Hemingway's works, for it imbibes the values of Christianity namely pity, love, compassion, mercy, and brotherhood. There is a use of Christian symbolism in the novella and critics regard it as a Christian and religious allegory. Hemingway had always been religious though perhaps not so much of the orthodox dogmatic variety. Hemingway's religion was always the religion of a man and morals. Santiago not merely loves the creatures of the land and sky but also has a sense of brotherhood towards them. He even considers the stars to be his " brothers "[10] because Santiago feels a bond for the creatures around him. He is not really lonely, though he is alone.

Seeing the flight of wild ducks against the sky over water, Santiago knew that no man was ever alone on the sea. Santiago and his fish are yoked by Hemingway's method of using the animal to epitomize some aspect of the man. The result is gallantry against gallantry. It is in fact more nearly fakery: a make-believe super-fish dueling a make-believe super-fisherman.

The Christian qualities of Santiago have already been pointed out. Now the specific religious references in the novella and the Christ –like qualities of the old man will be considered. Santiago's name is significant. Santiago (St. James) was one of the disciples of Christ. He has qualities that often associated with Jesus Christ. Melvin Backman has discussed at length Hemingway's deliberate use of Christian symbols in this novella. The old man is gallant and he has the ability to ignore pain in the face of larger object which is to be achieved. Commenting on the following lines, "he took his suffering as it came ", "he leaned against the wood of the bow."[11] Melvin comments that the words " suffering, gentleness" and "wood " are images that blend magically into an image of Christ on the cross."[12] The old man often refers to his hands. Noticeably the right hand is the "good " hand and the left hand is the "bad" hand. Carlos Baker comments, "Santiago has been conscious of his hands as any crucified man might be."[13] The image of old man's face with dried blood on it as from a crown of thorns, further intensifies the symbol of Christ.

Towards the end of the story, there is a description of the old man carrying the mast from the ship to his shack. Carlos Baker

comments that this is meant to remind the reader of Christ under the weight of the cross. The image is strengthened further.

The Old Man says "ah"[14] when he sees a school of scavenger sharks , "there is no translation of this word and perhaps it is just a noise such as a man might make involuntarily, feeling the nail through his hands and into the wood ."[15] It is quite obvious that Hemingway used biblical images from the life of the Saviour, to bring out the Christian qualities of the old man. As Christ showed man the way of redemption, Santiago showed the way of redemption and self – purification to mankind in the modern world. The way Santiago performs his function as a fisherman becomes a metaphor for how man lives. .

The old Man has some good friends who are kind to him. He has been given a newspaper, and Martin, the owner of a local restaurant gives him the occasional meal. Monolin dotes on him like a loving son and constantly runs errands for him. Monolin's admiration of Santiago, both as man and fisherman, enhances our sense of Santiago's stature. Santiago has the Christian virtues of piety, compassion, and endurance. His piety is apparent in his constant, accepted and unquestioned awareness of supernatural power. His allusions to God and virgin Mary are not hollow oaths as one might expect to find in a fisherman, rather they are petitions to a source of strength, of which he feels the need. However, Santiago does not depend on god only but he massages the hand, but he massages his hands and exposes them to the sun. Besides he eats raw tuna when he finds nothing to eat. From time to time he also

says the formal prayers like 'hail Marys' and 'our Fathers'. The old Man and the Sea, like the other works of Hemingway, appeals at different levels. It is a story of dignity, pride, patience, humanity, a story of growth of hero's soul, and a work of artistic excellence and stylistic achievement. It is a popular novel which is also a classic fit for enlightened appreciation. The whole of Hemingway's work can be taken as a single unit. The ironic theme is illustrated in all of his fictional works, major as well as minor, and becomes the main subject of The Old Man and the Sea, in which a man is pitted against the vast limitless ocean and it's denizens.

To sum up it can be said that the old man is the winner who takes nothing ; he is the winner in the battle he loses. Ultimately what affects the reader is not whether he lost or won, our admiration is for the way he conducted himself throughout and, eventually, he remains undefeated.

Similarly, in A farewell to Arms, the autobiographical strain is unmistakable. This novel consists of fictionalized account of the events of 1918 which Hemingway wrote about ten years after the occurrence. In this novel the twins themes of war and love are inextricably linked to each other. The story is set in the midst of war. Hemingway had seen war very closely ; he had worked as an ambulance driver during the first world war. He reported on the Greco-Turkish war. In 1936 when civil war broke out in Spain, he went there, rushing to the front as soon as they landed in Spain.

Hemingway also went to china during the war, as a war correspondent. As a child Hemingway and his siblings had heard

stories of the civil war from paternal grandfather who had participated in the war. His stories had made them believe that war was an exciting adventure. He had always spoken of " our glorious army "[16]and "our brave boys in blue"[16]s if every body has been a hero and war itself was wonderful. But Hemingway found out for himself how terrible it can be. His disgust for war is voiced for several characters in A Farewell to Arms, such as the priest, Rinaldi, and even Frederick Henry himself who is fed up with a war that he does not even want to talk or read about it. In this work Hemingway shows how was disrupt the normal course of love. Hemingway saw the holocaust of the two world wars, apart from the A Greco-Turkish war, Chinese war and the Spanish civil war. Considering the violence of the age, he becomes the up holders of the only humanism which seemed possible at that time. From disillusion and distrust of all values, he sang around to the exultation of honor and a code of behavior which was convincing and humane. Brutality, death, violence, decay, and chaos are facts of life. It is a world where there are no moral sanctions as such, but one should rise above the chaos and confusion of life by cultivating individual courage, endurance, stoicism, honour, and fortitude. There is no escape from the facts of life but it is necessary to triumph over them. The highest value that Hemingway upholds in it, conveys a valuable message to mankind that fate traps you, be brave and face the consequences with patience.

We may now examine A Farewell to Arms in the light of the above assertions.

Hemingway was a little worried about how A Farewell to Arms would fare, when it was published in 1929, as a novel about the great war. Hemingway, being a realistic writer, did not want to romanticize the rougher aspects of life, his descriptions and dialogues were couched, sometimes, in vulgar but realistic language, the way people really speak. When the novel was published in 1929, there was a flood of positive reviews. As a conscious craftsman, Hemingway uses suggestion and symbolism in a skilful way, sometimes, without appearing to do so. This is in accordance with his famous theory of the iceberg: The dignity of movement of an iceberg is due to only one-eighth of it being above water.

The novel opens with a very symbolic paragraph which prefigures the doom that is to follow. Fredrick Henry is alienated in the Italian army and he drives the ambulance on the Austro-Italian border. He leads a life that is meaningless, but behind it there is a dissatisfaction and disgust. The others at the mess are happy and content as they are. This is apparent from the fact that when the other officers bait the priest of the mess, Fredrick Henry is only a spectator, he does not participate and remain a spectator. When he is wounded in the trench motor explosion, the priest visits him in the hospital and Fredrick admits "I like him."[17] Frederick has an area of communication with the priest whereas the others do not. This in itself is significant. Both Henry and Catherine are not technically Christians that is devote and pragmatic Christians, but they are on

the side of the priest, so their Christian values are implied. The priest not only embodies the Christian values of love and forgiveness but he is also associated with the concept of home. Frederick admits that he is not religious but he does pray for Catherine when she has a tough time at the hospital. The prayer may not be taken as a sign of weakness on the part of Hemingway's hero; he prays no doubt, but it is his own inner resource and strength that he depends on in his hour and need much like the old man, Santiago. Hemingway himself did not apparently believe much in the outward Christianity but the values of Christianity were dear to him. Catherine, too, was not religious in the technical sense of the word, but she tells Frederick Henry "you are my religion."[18]Frederick Henry's involvement with Catherine in a non-serious affair at the beginning. He was just having a good time of it and Catherine too was going a head with flirtation in a world of believing where Henry was to be a substitute for the lover she had lost in the war. It is a matter of calculation on both sides like a game of chess. But despite themselves they can not help falling seriously in love. Now without Catherine, Frederick feels lonely and hollow. He admits to himself, "God know I had not wanted to fall in love with her. I had not wanted to fall in love with anyone."[19]e avoided personal relationships of depth and intensity. He drank and joked with the officers at the mess but these personal relationships were on superficial level. After he falls in love with Catherine, this indifference is broken down. The two are now as one, "I want what you want. There is not any of me anymore just what you want." [20]Their love has the classical quality of being enduring,

but the reader knows that fate is going to cut it short, as Frederick quotes the line from Marvell:

"And always at my back I hear time's winged chariot hurrying near."[21]

when Catherine dies at the hospital, she accepts her death stoically, " I am not a bit afraid ,it is just a dirty trick."[22]We are reminded of what the priest had said earlier," it is in defeat that we became Christians."[23]Frederick faces Catherine's death with enormous courage and reserve, refusing the help offered by the doctor. The world broke him but we know that afterwards he will be strong in the broken places. Hemingway's world is like that, "if people bring so much carriage to this world, the world has to kill them or break them, so of course it kills them. The world breaks everyone and afterwards many are strong at the broken places. But those that will not break it kills. It kills the very good and the very gentle and the very brave impartially. If you are non of these you can be sure it will kill you too but there will be no special hurry."[24] both Fredrick and Catharine, their stoic endurance is their victory. They are defeated on their own terms and even in defeat they maintain the ideal of themselves, some definition of how a man should behave. They represent a notion of code and honor. It is the discipline of the code that makes man human.

It is the code that gives meaning at least partially to the confusion of life. In a code abandoned world, man can realize a meaning only in so far as he can define and maintain the code.

Once Fredrick deserted the war, he was so disgusted and fed up with it that he does not want to have anything to do with it, not even to read or hear about it for now he has made his "separate peace", and his only obligation now his fidelity to Catherine. The two now project their love for each other is what counts. It reminds us of Mathew Arnolds "Dover beach", wherein we have similar situation "where ignorant armies clash by night". But the poet requests to his beloved to remain faithful to each other represent Hemingway's vision of love in a world without certitude.

"Ah love, let us be true
To one another"

Fredrick behaves rationally when he deserts the army, but fate and destiny prove that his efforts were futile. He escapes the social trap several times, deserting the army without being shot ; but eventually the biological trap got hold of the lovers. So, in that sense, is rationality failed. He could not succeed; this is a fact, but what is important is that he became more realistic. The reality of life are real and they help Hemingway's characters to become strong. Hemingway's world is a world of realism. He likes to project things "the way it was."[26] aspect of realism in contrast to romanticism is that individuals are depicted not as masters of their fate but rather as without control over their destiny. What is in their hands is to live life according to some value system. Hemingway's emphasis on realism is another aspect of his humanism.

The world of war is inhuman one but Hemingway's shows that even in the midst of war, human values such as friendship, do exist. Fredrick's friendship with Renaldi is the chief comfort in Hennery's life before he meets Catherine. The book doesn’t end with a solution that is generally acceptable, but it embodies a moral effort and a significant document of human endeavor to achieve ideal values. Rinaldi is staunchly loyal to his friend. There are lesser friendships that affect Frederick Henry's progress. When he is wounded, his friends carry him to safe place. In the Milan hospital, Gage, the nurse, assures him of her sincere friendship. She does whatever she can to alleviate their suffering. Nurse Fergusen is a good friend and constantly worries about them. Count Greffi gives him good advice. Even the casual friends offer their services: the proprietor of the bar offers him help after Frederick Henry becomes a fugitive. Simmons, the singer, gives him civilian clothes so that no one would suspect him. At the hospital the porter and his wife offer to help Frederick Henry.

The point Hemingway makes in this novel is that one can not make "A separate peace". There are forces both social and biological to ruin the peace. Meaning, however, lies in trying to live life according to one's private code of morality, as Fredrick Henry and Catherine do. This is in essence Hemingway's humanistic values in the modern world.

Notes

1-Peter L. Hays , Ernest Hemingway (New York .The continuum publishing company ,(1990),pp.108-109 .

2-Ibid . ,pp.108-109 .

3-Ernest Hemingway , The Old Man and the Sea ,(London : Granada publishing LTD.,1980)p.5.

4-Ibid. ,p.5 .

5-Ibid, .p.55 .

6-Ibid. ,p.45 .

7-Ibid .,p.55 .

8-Ibid ,p.89 .

9-Ernest Hemingway , The Old Man and the Sea ,p.54 .

10-Ibid.,p.55 .

11.Melvin Backman ,'The Metador and the crucified, In modern fiction studies I (Aug I955),PP.2-11 .

12-Carlos Baker , Hemingway :The writer as Artist ,pp.313-314.

13-Ernest Hemingway , The Old Man and the Sea , p.92.

14-Ibid.,p.92 .

15-Ibid .,p.94 .

16-Peter Buckley, Ernest (New York: The Dial press, 1987), p.115.

17-Ibid. , p.115 .

18-Ernest Hemingway, A Farewell to Arms, (London:Grafton, books,1977), p.52.

19-ibid.p.85.

20-ibid.p.70 .

21-ibid,.p.79 .

22-ibid,.p.113.

23-Ibid.p.235 .

24-Ibid.p.129 .

25-Ibid.p.178 .

26-Title of Mary Walsh Hemingway's Book on Ernest Hemingway .

Bibliography

-Baker,Carlos .Ernest Hemingway: A Life story. New York,1969.

-Hemingway,Mary welsh. How It Was.U.S.A.1976.

-Backman,Melvin. Modern Fiction Studies I.1955 .

-Baker,Carlos. Hemingway: The Writer as Artist. USA 1972.

-Flora, M-Joseph. Ernest Hemingway: A Study of the Short Fiction. Massachussetes, 1989.

-Halt Henry. Ernest Hemingway: The Writer and War. London, 1937.

-Hamid, S-A. The Short Fiction of Ernest Hemingway: A Study in Major Themes. New Delhi, 1985.

-Hays, Peter L. Ernest Hemingway. New York 1990.

-Nagal, James. Ernest Hemingway: The Writer in Context. Wis Consin, 1984.

-Jones, Howard Mumford. American Humanism: It's Meaning for World Survivor. New York. 1957.

-Roy, M. N. New Humanism: A Manifesto Calcutta, 1961.